DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 133 008 JC 770 046

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TITLE State Funding of Community College Community Services Noncredit Offerings: Current Patterns and Problems.
PUB DATE [76]
NOTE 13p.

EDRS PRICE MF-$0.83 HC-$1.67 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS Adult Education; Community Colleges; *Community Service Programs; *Educational Finance; Educational Trends; Financial Problems; *Junior Colleges; National Surveys; *Noncredit Courses; *State Aid; State Standards

ABSTRACT

Questionnaires were sent to 23 state directors of community college systems during fall 1976 to determine funding patterns for community college community services noncredit offerings. Eighteen responses were received. Results of the survey indicated that over half of the states do not support community services noncredit courses. At least three states distinguish between hobby/recreational courses (not funded) and general education/adult self-improvement courses (funded) although, in practice, this distinction seems to lead to some difficult judgments. Two interesting developments were noted: (1) transformation of noncredit courses into credit courses for the purposes of securing regular funding; and (2) emphasis on development and offering of courses around specific funding sources. Overall, the survey information revealed a general decrease of state support for community services, confirming the peripheral status of many such programs in their specific institutions. A reversal of this trend might be accomplished through development of coordinating bodies designed to reduce duplication while increasing combined use of facilities, resource people, and publicity channels. Additionally, such a body might increase participation in programs while simultaneously becoming an effective lobbying organization. (Author/JDS)

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ED133008

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STATE FUNDING OF COMMUNITY COLLEGE COMMUNITY SERVICES NONCREDIT OFFERINGS: CURRENT PATTERNS AND PROBLEMS

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As community and junior colleges face the dual problems of rising costs and stabilizing or declining enrollments, there is a corresponding effort to increase community support for these institutions. Desired outcomes of such improved support include short-term enrollment increases and a long-term improved climate for higher education, as reflected in public funding at all levels. Administrators thus stress their college's involvement with the community, and place special emphasis on courses for "lifelong learning", which bring traditionally non-student populations into contact with the college.

Such "lifelong learning" offerings tend to be the responsibility of a particular college division, operating under a heading such as "Community Services", "Continuing Education", "Adult Education", or other title. This division's range of operations may include extended day programs, adult basic education, avocational courses, and even drunk driver re-education. Yet most community services divisions, by whatever names, share one common denominator--many or all of their offerings are noncredit. The noncredit category can be most responsive to changing community needs, without the time lag and red tape required for credit course approval. Community services directors, faced by 15 or more prospective enrollees and a willing instructor, can authorize a tremendous variety of noncredit offerings.

The major difficulty which has historically been asso-

ciated with this great flexibility is that noncredit courses tend to be funded differently than credit courses. While most states fund credit courses on an FTE basis, noncredit offerings rarely receive full state support, relying instead on participants' fees, local public support, co-sponsorship with other agencies, and some grants for specific programs. Noting this difference in his 1969 Community Services Working Paper, George Traicoff suggested that community services programs were "...hamstrung by the necessity of being able to conduct only isolated community services classes and then only after monies for the programs have been found, program by program, course by course."[1] Traicoff felt he saw "...the beginnings of a ray of hope for obtaining funds through the public services section of the state's educational budget..."[2] Yet Stephen A. Douglass, Jr., in his 1971 survey of noncredit adult education in the community colleges of the North Central accrediting region, found that participants' fees accounted for more than half of the financial support of all courses except for adult basic courses.[3] A 1973 check of community services funding in seven "pacesetter" states (California, Florida, Illinois, Michigan, New York, Texas, and Washington) by Arthur H. Evans, Jr., indicated that state public funds accounted for only one-fourth of total support, and this figure largely reflected Florida's 71% state support.[4] He still ranked participants' fees over local, state or federal public funds, and over various private funding sources.

This researcher, recognizing the many changes in the community college scene during the several years since Evans' data was collected, and believing that the measure of commitment to a program is reflected in the financial support given that program, initiated a survey of state funding patterns for community college community services noncredit offerings, during the fall of 1976.

Findings

Questionnaires were sent to 23 state directors of community college systems, with responses received from 18 offices. Table 1 indicates state funding (or lack of same) for direct community services noncredit costs, since most states do cover the indirect costs of such programs. Table 2 expands on the state funding method for those states which do support these community services courses. Finally, while not a formal part of the inquiry, many replies mentioned other sources of support, and these are listed in Table 3.

The most obvious pattern is that over half the states do not support community services noncredit courses, and usually mention the previously noted funding mainstay, participants' fees. Of states which do provide money for noncredit courses, Iowa, North Carolina, and Oregon distinguish between hobby or recreational courses, which are not funded, and general education or adult self-improvement courses, which do receive support. An Oregon publication illustrates that this logical distinction can lead to some difficult judgments in practice, when Upholstery,

Table 1
STATE FUNDING FOR DIRECT COST OF COMMUNITY SERVICES NONCREDIT OFFERINGS

STATE	
Arizona	None
Arkansas	None
California	None
Colorado	None
Connecticut	None
Florida	1975-76, partial funding of community services courses 1976-77, partial funding of courses addressing "a significant community problem" and recommended by District Coordinating Council
Illinois	FY76, partial funding FY77, no funding (funding vetoed by governor)
Iowa	No funds for avocational and recreational courses Partial funding of continuing and general education courses
Kansas	Only credit community services courses offered; all state funded
Maryland	Partial funding--State Board approved courses only
Minnesota	1975-76, none 1976-77, partial funding
Mississippi	None
Nevada	None
North Carolina	No funds for recreational programs Complete funding of continuing education courses
Oregon	No funds for hobby or recreational courses Complete funding of adult self-improvement and adult developmental education courses
Pennsylvania	Partial funding
Texas	None
Washington	None

Five other states contacted without response.

Table 2

STATE	STATE ALLOCATION FORMULA OR APPROPRIATIONS METHOD
Florida	1975-76, state paid cost/FTE not paid by student fees, federal funds, or local contributions--averaged $954 for 28 community college regions 1976-77, allocate 75% of available community service dollars to the 28 regions, based on percentage of total 1975-76 such dollars received by region; allocate next 20% to regions based on region's population over age 18; allocate last 5% to meet specific needs. Funds appropriated to courses addressing "a significant community problem", recommended by District Coordinating Council
Illinois	FY76, based on 5¢/capita (1970 Federal Census) for community college district population, appropriated as basic or supplemental state Public Service Grants FY77, none
Iowa	Formula is FTEE X 180 days X $2.25; actual appropriation is based on previous year's total cost/FTEE for each merged area school, plus an inflation adjustment--state pays amount not covered by local funds
Maryland	State Board approved courses funded as regular credit courses--30 credit hours = 1 FTE; maximum of $700 state aid/FTE
Minnesota	1975-76, none 1976-77, $1500 per college for demonstration projects
North Carolina	Specific continuing education appropriations, state grants; self-supporting recreational programs return money to the state, over and above their cost
Oregon	680 clock hours of instruction = 1 FTE; in 1975-76, state paid $835/FTE for first 1,100, $670 for each additional FTE
Pennsylvania	About 10% of total state budget to each college goes toward community services noncredit offerings

Table 3

STATE	OTHER FUNDING SOURCES NOTED
Arizona	Participants' fees
Arkansas	Self-finance
California	Local tax
Colorado	Self-supporting
Connecticut	Self-supporting; grants under Title XX of the Social Security Act, Title I of the Higher Education Act; service contracts with businesses and industries; specific proposal requests from Dept. of Vocational Rehabilitation and from the Veterans Administration
Florida	Student fees; federal funds; local contribution
Illinois	Local matching funds; local tax support
Iowa	Tuition and fees; reimbursement aids; sales and service taxes; local tax revenue
Kansas	None
Maryland	None
Minnesota	None
Mississippi	None
Nevada	None
North Carolina	Federal funds for Adult Basic Education; state grant for Human Resource Development program
Oregon	Student charges; local property taxes
Pennsylvania	None
Texas	Participants' fees
Washington	Participants' fees

Cake Decorating, and Chinese Water Color courses are non-reimbursable, while Home Gardening, Home Canning, and Water Color Painting are reimbursable.[5]

Several states rely partially on support from the local tax base. Illinois noted a new proposal in that state to reserve 1¢ of local tax support for public services/adult education.

Other interesting developments include Connecticut's comment that although the state currently offers no support to community services courses, they are in the process of developing a formula for funding community services based on selected criteria. The state of North Carolina noted that their self-supporting recreational programs returned almost $40,000 to the state last year. Kansas reports "...all of our schools offer community service courses for college credit" in order to obtain state funding. This represents a common goal for many community services divisions--to develop their courses into state funded credit offerings. While the advantages to this system are obvious, it may also rule out valuable offerings which don't receive approval for credit.

More disquieting patterns also emerge. The state of Washington terminated state support for community services courses in 1971. In Florida, the 1976-77 state funding is changing from partial funding of community services to partial funding of only those courses which contribute to the identification and solution of a community problem in defined subject areas, and which are recommended by a

district coordinating council. Any other community services courses are no longer supported.

The governor of Illinois vetoed the FY77 appropriations for community services and continuing education courses, although the legislature could override the veto.

Discussion

The above information hardly indicates a general increase in state support of community services, and, in fact, shows some movement away from such state aid. This lack of a real financial commitment to community services confirms the peripheral status of many such programs in their respective institutions.[6] If they don't count in the FTE, these divisons lack the power to influence even their own futures. Course offerings tend to be structured around the requirements of specific funding sources, rather than around community needs. Furthermore, the available funding sources are divided between the overlapping programs offered by a constantly growing list of agencies--community colleges, universities, community schools, church groups, civic organizations, municipal recreation departments, and more.[7] This fragments the popular support for community service education, and can reduce the viability of meaningful programs.

A reversal of this trend, in the form of coordinating bodies composed of area directors of community services/continuing education/adult education programs could reduce duplication, and increase combined use of facilities, resource people, and publicity channels. Such coordination

might increase public participation in previously under-enrolled offerings, and might allow funding of new courses. The coordinating committee, as the representative of a large number of adult learners, could then lobby on both the local and state level for increased public funding of community education programs.

Even with this approach, meaningful financial commitment in the form of state support for all community services offerings represents an unlikely national trend for the forseeable future. The pattern of state support in Iowa, North Carolina, and Oregon, which fund general education or self-improvement courses but do not fund recreational offerings, appears a more realistic goal. Failing even this commitment on the part of the states, community services non-credit courses must receive funds from other sources. Participants' fees, with their inherent benefits and limitations, seem destined to remain the major source. Local tax support will probably be increasingly explored, yet this avenue may face public resistance. Cooperation with community agencies and organizations appears both necessary and hopeful, as mentioned above. The prospect of state, or even more commonly, federal, grants has been covered so thoroughly in the literature[8] that no more will be said here.

Unfortunately, neither specific grants nor other funding sources, except general appropriations for community services (and these probably from the state), can allow community services directors the necessary freedom

to develop programs of instruction rather than just individual courses. Without a reliable source of public fund support, community services programs cannot realize their full potential for furthering lifelong learning in their communities. Current funding patterns do not offer this support.

Footnotes

1. George Traicoff, Obtaining Financial Support for Community Services Programs (ED 032 052, 1969), p. 1.

2. Ibid., p. 3.

3. Stephen A. Douglass, Jr., Status of Noncredit Adult Education in the Community Colleges of the North Central Accrediting Region, in Dissertation Abstracts International, v. 32 (1971), p. 2993-A.

4. Arthur H. Evans, Jr., Sources of Funding of Community Services in Public Community and Junior Colleges (ED 076 182, 1973), p. 10.

5. Oregon Educational Coordinating Commission, Adult/Continuing Education in Oregon (Oregon Educational Coordinating Commission, August 12, 1976), p. 29.

6. David S. Bushnell, Needed: A Voucher Plan in Support of Continuing Education (ED 082 006, 1973), p. 6.

7. Ibid.

8. see William A. Keim, and others, A Manual for Establishing a Community College Community Services Program; A Practical Guide to the Community-Based, Performance-Oriented Institution of Post Secondary Learning (ED 110 139, 1975), pp. 70-79.

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